



GUNFIGHTER GAZETTE

1st Battalion, 1st Aviation Regiment Family Readiness Group Newsletter

MAY 2004

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A Message From Gun 6



Fellow Gunfighters,

We had a superb month of April—flying, driving, fixing, fueling, arming, firing, guarding, upgrading, policing, stocking, and supporting—you name it, we did it. And at the end of our 1000-plus flying-hour month (which takes three months to fly in Germany), we flew missions across the division's area of operation, day and night, rain (really) or shine. We accomplished all our tasks, most importantly, with no serious injuries or equipment damage.

We've conducted some extraordinary missions with lots of action, as well as some that were not so thrilling. Either way, we consider each absolutely successful, especially when ground forces tell us that the mere sound of a Gunfighter in his or her Apache overhead instantly puts all belligerent forces in check. Although we may not detect it from the cockpit, we know our presence is felt. And that's why we fly: to support our ground forces, whether they're fellow Gunfighters convoying between here and Balad or infantry soldiers in contact with an enemy.

In addition to the proud accomplishments of our units at FOB Speicher, I'd like to highlight the Ghost Rider team (C Co., D Co. slice, and HHC support element) who continue to thrive south in Balad. They've painstakingly improved their conditions significantly and provided outstanding attack helicopter support from their split-based location. Still, we'd love to have them consolidated with the battalion (for many reasons) and are considering when and if this could occur. (More to follow.)

We all experienced an emotional setback with the recent R & R leave allocation. I believe this is only the temporary result of the volatile situation we're currently experiencing in Iraq—the same unpredictable circumstances that extended 1st Armor Division in theater. We will continue to strive for the maximum slots available for all of us to enjoy a well-deserved break. But like any blessing, we're thankful for what we receive and are reminded of those who have less.

"A Message from Gun 6" in continued on the next page.

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The staff duty numbers may be used to reach all rear-detachment personnel.

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1-1 Web Site

www.1-1avnbns.ansbach.army.mil/

Newsletter Web Site

www.spilmanconsulting.com/gg

A Message From Gun 6

Continued from page 1.

On April 30, we hosted COL Golden and CSM Murray on a tour of our assembly area. They walk through our area everyday en route to the dining facility and their quarters, but this was an "open house" to share the many accomplishments we've worked hard to achieve in a very short period of time. I have no doubt that we'll reinforce their perception that the 1st Battalion, 1st Aviation Regiment of the 1st Infantry Division is so designated for a reason. We're number one!

Of course, it all begins with great soldiers who can accomplish any task, anytime, anywhere, with the selfless support of their spouses, children, parents, and friends. In closing, I'd just like to say thanks: for your personal efforts on our behalf; for the activities you organize and participate in to bring our families closer in Katterbach; for the cards, letters, packages, and e-mails that keep us close regardless of distance; and for being there for us on good days and bad ones.

Respectfully,



LTC David R. Moore
Commander, 1-1 AVN Regiment, 4th BDE, 1ID

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Balad Address Change

Attention families of soldiers stationed at LSA Anaconda! The address for Balad-based soldiers has changed and was incorrect in the April newsletter. The correct address is:

Soldier's Name and Rank
Soldier's Company, 1-1 AVN REGT, 1st ID
OIF 2—LSA Anaconda
APO AE 09392

Hammer Update

Contributed by CPT Levi Dunton, Hammer 6

We're seasoned. Spicy hot, actually. In fact, we kick so much booty on a daily basis that it's becoming second nature. How, you ask? By pumping fuel by the tanker-load; stocking pallet after pallet of ammunition; guarding twenty-five square miles of perimeter territory twenty-four hours a day; keeping the big rigs rolling through the heat, dust, and daily abuse of a hard week's work; and making sure that every last soldier has everything he or she needs to keep the mind sharp and the eyes steely while walking the razor's edge here in Iraq. We're looking svelte, sporting suntans that would make any farmer jealous, and we've practically forgotten what it feels like to lounge about without forty pounds of Kevlar and a ceramic second skin, a Camelback tube clenched in our teeth, or our mitts curled around the grips of our trusty sidearms.

We definitely have our routines established, which can be both good and bad. It's good, because we've worked the kinks out of daily life and have things running smoothly around the clock. It's not so good, maybe, because now that we've cracked the code on kicking some serious tail nonstop 24/7 without having to overexert our ingenuity, Groundhog Day creeps that much closer. That's not to say we've seen everything there is to see yet. For one thing, it's hot but manageable so far. I have a creeping suspicion that it's going to go from pleasantly warm to Oh-Sweet-Lord-make-it-stop-please-end-it-now hellishly scorching hot in a few short weeks. Just adjusting to the rising temperatures and figuring out how to keep up the pace is going to keep us on our toes for a while. Air conditioning is a wonderful thing. Another reason we're still not completely settled into a rut is the prospect of getting a new batch of living containers to accommodate the crew currently operating out of Anaconda with the Charlie Company team when they move up here. When? Good question—could be weeks, could be months, could be a plan that never quite happens due to the guys south of Speicher being unwilling to give up their Apache coverage. But it does add a certain sense of mystery guessing when (or if) we'll all be consolidated in one place anytime soon. Finally, the situation for other locations in Iraq is just dicey enough that we never forget that we're in contested turf, and we can't let our collective guard down or get too complacent when we're flying or doing the occasional convoy thing.



"Hammer Update" is continued on page three.

Hammer Update

Continued from page two.

Well, if I knew how to spin the latest news on R & R so that everyone was satisfied with the results, I might have a future in politics. Unfortunately, I don't have any idea how to make the news that only a few of the Gunfighters might get a chance at two weeks leave in May sound palatable. Just the same, here's my best attempt: So far, the touch-and-go situations elsewhere in Iraq have persuaded our leaders at the highest level that we might want to keep the real butt-kickers close by until things calm down a bit and the few bad apples left here realize that elections are going to happen in spite of their sad acts of desperation. Yes, I'm disappointed too, but I'm trying to keep the positive vibes flowing without setting myself up for further disappointment with unrealistic expectations. Perhaps you might find some small consolation in the knowledge that soldiers will be able to enjoy a pass to the Lake Dokan resort in northern Iraq or sunny Camp As Sayliyah in Qatar during their stay in this otherwise tumultuous region. It's not exactly the same as going home, but it is a welcome change of pace, even if it is just for one weekend. There is definitely more to follow on this issue.

As always, I find myself elevated by the positive mental attitudes and the quiet determination of your spouses and loved ones. Every time I think that maybe this particular task might be asking the Hammers for more than they can give, the soldiers make me kick myself for ever doubting. Seeing these guys work hard, play harder, and getting each other through each day despite the challenging, sometimes monotonous, sometimes daunting tasks before them renews my faith in the good we're accomplishing here. If you could see the quiet resolve in their eyes when it's time to get down to business, you would know, too, that the bad guys don't stand a chance.

We couldn't do any of it without your constant support and affirmation, and for that we will be forever in your debt. Thanks for giving us a home so good that we won't ever stop missing it. We won't forget that we are here—at least in part—to give our Iraqi brethren a chance at something like it.

Taz Devil Update

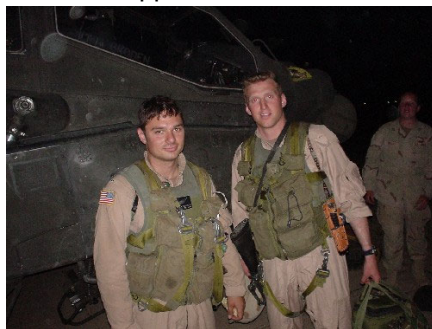
Contributed by CPT John Broam, Taz 6

The Taz Devils have established their battle rhythm and are mission-focused. We have flown more than seventy-four combat missions in the month of April amassing more than 400 flight hours. That's a true testament to the outstanding work each and every Taz Devil has contributed over the past month. We continue to provide convoy security, reconnaissance, local security, and raid support to the 1st Infantry Division. Our focus will always be on providing the most effective lethal support possible for the ground unit in contact with the enemy. Our support is crucial to saving lives as well as finding, fixing, and destroying the enemy.

Taz Village has grown in the past month. There have been new buildings added for new housing and showers. We continue to improve our living conditions when time allows. Our construction has been hampered at times by the weather and been a cause for repair on other occasions. We thought at one point that you might have sent the rain from Germany. It has rained about seven days throughout the month of April, and the winds have been very strong at times. One night the winds were so bad that they ripped half of the roof off of one of our buildings and took the entire roof off of D Co.'s command post. No one was hurt, but it made for an interesting night as you can imagine.

Due to many of the convoys not getting through to many of the FOBs over the past month, our dining facility has taken to only serving breakfast and dinner.

Lunch and midnight chow are an MRE. Needless to say, it shows how reliant we are on those supply convoys. Just yesterday we escorted some fuel convoys up the MSR (main supply route), and we have been providing MSR security for most of the convoys on a more regular basis. Over the past week, our chow has improved somewhat, and we expect it to only get better in the coming weeks. We aren't starving yet, so don't worry too much.



Another month has passed, and we are one month closer to returning to our families and loved ones. R & R will start soon, and my hope is for all of our soldiers to get the chance to take it. It all depends on what allocations we are given due to mission and personnel-strength requirements to continue the mission while personnel are away. Julie and I will keep you posted on any changes. The pass program has begun, and three of our soldiers will go to Qatar and Lake Dokan in May on a four-day pass. My intent is for everyone to get the chance to take a pass, as well as return for R & R during the next ten months.

The Taz Devil family would like to wish a very happy birthday to **Madison McDowell**, SPC Robert McDowell's daughter, on May 16.

I can't thank you enough for your continued support of the Taz Devils. The conditions could definitely be

"Taz Devil Update" is continued on page 4.

Taz Devil Update

Continued from page 3.

worse, but our spirits are high because of each and every one of you. Your support and the support of all those who take the time to send packages, letters, words of encouragement, and prayers make it possible for us to make it through each day. Each of those days brings us closer to being with our families again.

We have begun to post pictures on our company Web site (www.angelfire.com/hero/apache), and they should be posted on the battalion Web site as well. Please continue to keep Julie informed, and let us know if you need anything.

Duty First!

A Message From Gun 7

Contributed by CSM James Martin

The Gunfighter family would be proud of what we've done here at Camp Speicher. Our soldiers are making a difference whether flying or fixing aircraft. By looking at how we are shaping the area of operation, we have gone from rags to riches. The Gunfighters are adapting to change very quickly, especially the weather. I never thought I'd see so much rain in the desert. The soldiers of 1-1 AVN are surely leading the way here. I am proud to be a member of the battalion, but I mostly proud of our soldiers.

NCOs lead from the front, but the soldiers make it happen!

Wolfpack Update

Contributed by CPT Malcolm Wise, Wolf 6

All is going well here at FOB Speicher. We are busier than ever with our day-to-day operations. Our aircrews and maintainers are getting the job done. Our soldiers are definitely making a difference with every mission flown. This past month, our company has begun to fall into somewhat of a steady state with company operations. Missions come in, we plan, and we are ready to execute twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

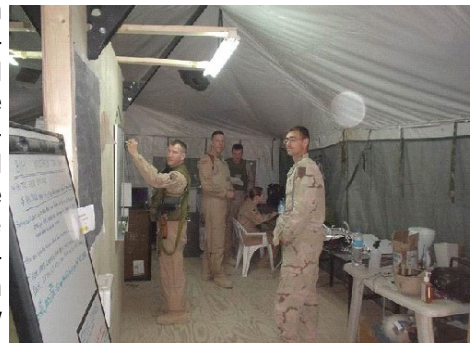
The majority of our soldiers are on a ten-hour work cycle. All except 1SG Greene, who is always up and about taking care of things for the company. I believe that he only pretends to sleep. He even finds time to get to a computer or telephone to call home, so don't let our soldiers fool you. They all have time to get to the MWR facility to get on the computer or to make a telephone call. As for our pilots, they are on a twelve-hour work cycle that rotates every two weeks. The pilots also have time to visit the MWR facility to make phone calls or to send e-mails because every cycle does not fly everyday. So if you are not hearing from your loved one here in Iraq, please let me know. We are busy, but not too busy that we can't call home every now and then just to say hello.



SFC Tebaldi, SGT Ashline, and 1SG Greene are hard at work on the MOC.

This month, our soldiers completed building our maintenance operational center, which we call the MOC. It's an air-conditioned building for our maintainers that is located right next to the flight line, so there's no more walking

back and forth from the company command post (CP) to the flight line. All aircraft tools and equipment are now stored in the MOC. The company will begin building our new CP this month. Hopefully we have enough time between



SPC Montgomery, CW3 St.Peters, CW2 Mansfield, LT Dunkle, and CW2 Gilpin plan a mission.

missions to have it up and operational before the mid-summer heat kicks in. We have plenty of air conditioners waiting to be installed. Our goal is to convert all of our company tents into new wooden buildings. We'll get there one step at a time.

I am very pleased to hear from our soldiers that our families are being well supported by Task Force Gunfighter and the Family Readiness Group. I encourage you all to continue to work with our unit representatives. I also thank each of you who have volunteered your time to help out and to plan activities for our company families. Your time and dedication are very much appreciated. Thank you!

Finally, Bravo Company would like to wish a very happy birthday to following: **Dena St. Peters** on May 4, **CW4 Ted Tomczyk** on May 11, and **Zack Moseley** on May 26. A very happy anniversary goes out to **SGT Rudolf and Kristin Laumbach** on May 21 and **CW3 Dan and Dena St. Peters** on May 26. Congratulations!

Take care, and keep the packages coming in. We love mail!

God bless.

Ghostrider Update

Contributed by CPT Lee Fennema, Ghost 6



Families and friends of the Ghostriders: Life here continues to be interesting and exciting. Although we've almost reached a steady state in terms of living conditions, we are constantly seeking ways to improve our quality of life. We were able to borrow an Internet café for a little more than a week, but unfortunately, we had to give it back. There is a good possibility that we'll be able to get this same type of system soon. In the meantime, snail mail is still working. Please refer to page 2 of the newsletter for the most current address for Balad. We apologize for the inconvenience. Please realize that systems and procedures are constantly changing in this area of the world.

The tactical operations and missions we are conducting continue to provide the ground soldiers and their convoys protection from above. We are all well aware of the fact that everything we do around here comes second to getting our aircraft prepared for flight and flown to protect our friends and comrades out in bad-guy country. There have been numerous occasions where I humbly accept absolute gratitude and appreciation from the individuals we protect and the mission we perform. Each and every member of this company is an integral contributor in accomplishing these difficult missions. We will continue providing this type of guardianship.

We are happy to welcome a few new members to the Ghostrider family: 1LT Pete Schmitt recently joined the battalion from Fort Rucker and moved down to assume platoon leader duties early this month. He is single but diligently continues his quest for that special someone. PFC Pentecost came to us from Delta Company right as we were leaving Kuwait for Iraq. It is time to say goodbye to CPT Thom Jones. He will assume duties as the 3/5 platoon leader here in Anaconda. He will continue to fly with us when he is not busy supplying us with fuel and ammunition.

Charlie Company would like to wish a very happy birthday to the following individuals: **Carson Cole** on May 4, **CW2 Rolando Sanchez** on May 6, **Lexis Perry** on May 7, **Jennifer Fennema** on May 10, **Mindy Richards** on May 16, **SPC Jason Whitlock** on May 17, **Mark Wright** on May 17, **Vanessa Sellers** on May 23, **Jamie Pentecost** on May 29, and **Jenica Lawson** on May 31.

Congratulations are in order for **CW4 Bob Fullerton**, who was promoted on April 1, and **PFC Penetcost**, who was promoted on May 1.

I hope everyone is enjoying spring wherever you are. We will continue to work communication improvements; I realize everyone's happiness, security, and comfort revolve around it. I promise not to give up on this. Take care.



Viking Update

Contributed by CPT Scott Thompson, Viking 6

This was the wake-up call I received in the wee hours of Friday, April 23, 2004: A light rap knocked at the flimsy metal sheet we call a door. I lay silently, hoping it was only the wind, a small pebble kicked up from the heel of a passing Gunfighter, or the return of the downpour I heard earlier.

The rap returns, a little heavier this time, and it increases in tempo and volume until it becomes urgent. I hear 1SG Williams stir; he sleeps lightly and is normally up much more quickly than me. Next, I hear the creak of an air mattress, the shuffle of feet on the cheap linoleum floor, and the slight metallic clink of the door handle being turned followed by the exchange of muffled voices.

The first sergeant speaks, "Sir." I peer out from under my sleeping bag. The muted colors of the pre-dawn sky fill the room. 1SG Williams rubs the sleep from his eyes. SSG Varnarsdale stands in the doorway, his pale, freckled skin and fiery red mane almost completely cov-

ered by his gear.

In a voice barely audible, I hear, "Sir, the CP [command post] is destroyed."

He has my attention. I raise my head from the pillow and let the sleeping-bag hood slide off of my head. Blinking, I mutter something like "Huh?"

A bit louder, Red says "Sir, the CP is destroyed."

The little gears in my head are spinning now, processing the data. There have been no loud explosions, calls for full battle rattle, but then I think, Red has always had a flair for the dramatic.

"The CP is destroyed?" I inquire. The comfort of my slumber is but a fleeting memory now.

"Yes sir," comes the matter-of-fact reply. The first sergeant shakes his head in apparent disbelief.

"Hold on," I mutter. "The CP is *destroyed*?"

"Viking Update" is continued on page 6.

Viking Update

Continued from page 5.

"Well, not completely destroyed. But it is an awful mess." Red's flair for the dramatic is at its finest.

I can imagine the scene of the roof taking flight, *Wizard of Oz*-style: SPC Welch would click his desert boots together saying, "There's no place like home, there's no place like home." SSG Green, arms laden with sundry electronic equipment, and SSG Varnarsdale, even paler than usual, would run for the door.

"An awful mess" was a fairly accurate description of the state of our CP, as the pictures below illustrate. Despite what I thought when we learned we were deploying to the desert, it does, in fact, rain here. And the most recent early morning storm included thunder, lighting, and microbursts of 50-plus mile-per-hour winds. The most intense of these microbursts apparently struck our CP head-on, and subsequently peeled the roof completely off the structure. It should be noted that the shop currently under construction by the shops platoon escaped this same weather phenomenon unscathed, and which earned it the moniker, "the Bomb Shelter."

This was but another insignificant hurdle for the Viking team. Like ants at a gummy-bear picnic, the Vikings descended on the roof that formerly covered our offices. Building materials are not as plentiful as we would like, so reutilization was a must if we were to get a roof up. HHC arrived to lend a helping hand and provided some key materials.

As the maintenance needs of the aircraft climbed and the heat of the day wore on, the worker bees on the CP began to dwindle. Soon it was down to the NCOs of QC "supervising," the men and women of the maintenance platoon working, and Viking 06 nailing and offering moral support. The tireless efforts of all involved resulted in a complete cover of plywood by nightfall. Another morning's work was all it took to complete reconstruction. I am proud of the team effort displayed in the face of adversity. It is a testament to the strength of character of every individual in the company.

SPC Moore and I recently convoyed with HHC down to LSA Anaconda to check on the Vikings supporting the Ghost rider team. The trip was relatively uneventful, and I think we owe the crews of both B and C Co. credit for providing reconnaissance and security along the route.

The Vikings in Balad are doing well, and they are finally getting settled into a regular routine after a few fits and starts in the establishment of a living area. Rumors abound as to if and when the C Co. team will join the rest of the Gunfighters at Camp Speicher, and when information becomes available, we will be sure to share it.

Recent events in the news have been causing quite a bit of concern (I know my mom and dad have worried). It has been a focus of all the leadership here to continue to improve the force protection measures already in place to provide the best possible protection for your loved ones. Rest assured that every Viking has continued to perform to the highest standard, and we stand ready to continue our success.



Super Sites

Just because school is almost out doesn't mean it's time to stop learning. Here are some great Web sites to help you learn alongside your kids.

Primary/Early Learning

- ◆ www.earobics.com/gamegoo/gooeey.html
- ◆ <http://pbskids.org/lions/games/>
- ◆ www.starfall.com
- ◆ www.perpetualpreschool.com
- ◆ www.primarygames.com

Reading, All Ages

- ◆ www.readinga-z.com

Math Games

- ◆ www.funbrain.com
- ◆ www.geocities.com/math_land/index.html

Miscellaneous Activities

- ◆ www.funschool.com
- ◆ www.kidsdomain.com/games/
- ◆ www.scholastic.com/kids/home_flash.asp
- ◆ www.gamequarium.com/
- ◆ <http://yahooligans.yahoo.com>
- ◆ www.netrover.com/~kingskid/108b/html

4th BDE Bits

► 4th Brigade is collecting photos for "A Day in the Life of Task Force Katterbach." Photos will be burned on a CD and sent downrange. Please send digital photos to CPT Alex Fuerst at alex.fuerst@cmtymail.98asg.army.mil. In your e-mail, identify your company and our battalion. Photos are due May 6.

► 2-1 AVN BN is planning a skate night on May 16 in the 2-1 hangar. More information will follow via e-mail.

► The 601st Book Club will host its next meeting to discuss *The DaVinci Code* on May 28. Call the Yellow Ribbon Room at 09802-832-225 for more information and specific times.

Gunfighter Happenings on the Home Front

Dear 1-1 AVN Family Members,

As we get close to summer, many of us are planning to take well-deserved vacations. During your travels, please keep our Task Force Gunfighter folks (CPT Josh Burton or Elizabeth Randall) and your FRG leader informed, so that we can reach you. Keeping our telephone number current applies to all of us whether we live here in Germany or in the States.

I want to thank everyone for the strength and teamwork you show toward your family, Gunfighter families, other families here in Germany and/or in the States, and to our deployed soldiers. This deployment is not easy on any of us, but we will make it by working together! I am very proud of what I see and hear. Know that your strength and teamwork have a very positive impact on our soldiers downrange as well as on one another.

Soon the Rest and Recuperation program (R & R) will begin, and as appropriate, our soldiers will participate. I ask you to recognize that this R & R program is a fantastic gift. Know that our Gunfighter command will do all that it can to achieve the best possible solution to get soldiers on leave. However, we all need to understand that there are several operational constraints that determine not only dates but also the slots for the soldiers. You should also be aware that many of these constraints fall outside the sphere of our command and beyond our battalion and 4th Brigade. To make the best use of this gift, we need to appreciate that a program like this exists and be flexible. Please communicate with your soldier as to what his/her approved R & R plans are. You can always contact CPT Josh Burton, Task Force Gunfighter commander, or your FRG leader with questions.

Very Respectfully,

Laura Moore

1-1 AVN REGT Family Readiness Group Leader

Company FRG Updates

HHC: Please join us for a Mother's Day potluck and white elephant part on May 9 at 1700 at the Yellow Ribbon Room. Bring a dish to share and a wrapped gift to play the game (find something in your basement or stuck in the back of a closet). A basket of goodies will be given away. Drinks will be provided. There is a room for your children to play. All HHC spouses are invited to attend even if you are not a mother. Call Laura Rouse, Angela McCormick, or Maria Martinez to RSVP by May 7.

The next Stammtisch will be held May 14 at Enzo's near Barton Barracks. Contact Daggi Sather at 09873-948-536 or e-mail daggi_1969@hotmail.com for more information.

Mark your calendar now for Friday, May 21. We'll be working on a special Father's Day project to send downrange. Watch your e-mail/mailbox for more information.

—Contributed by Laura Rouse, HHC FRG Leader

Alpha Company: A big thanks to Doris Hood for hosting our April coffee. We all had a wonderful time! Next month, we will be going to TGI Fridays in Heidelberg for our meeting on May 29. This is for adults only so please arrange for childcare. We will be meeting at the gas station at the Herrieden exit off of A6 and carpooling from there. We will be eating and shopping for the afternoon. You must call Julie at 09825-927-055 to RSVP by the 26th, so that we can make lunch reservations and ar-

range for transportation. So RSVP and start dreaming about what you are going to order!

—Contributed by Julie Broam, A Co. FRG Leader

Bravo Company: The April Bravo Company special event went well. Thank you for your participation. Our next event is May 7, when we'll see the production of *Noises Off* at the Terrace Playhouse. Call your sitters, and enjoy a night out. Please RSVP to LaSandra Wise no later than May 3.

—Contributed by LaSandra Wise, B Co. FRG Leader



Little Rudy Laumbach has a big slam dunk at B Co.'s April play morning.

Delta Company: Congratulations to the Flowers family on the new addition to their family! Also, a big thank you to the Czarnecki family for putting together the Easter bags and all the support that you give to the Delta families. Another big thank you goes to Beth Calkins for everything you do for the Delta families and in the community. Delta Company bowling night is May 6 from 1800-2000. Watch your mailbox for a flyer!

—Contributed by Ali Thompson, D Co. FRG Leader

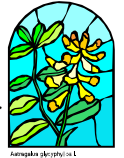
Around the Community

Are you looking for ways to fill your time now that your spouse is deployed? The good news is that there's a lot going on within the Ansbach community. Besides the activities that will be sponsored by the FRG throughout the deployment, the 235th BSB is increasing the number of programs available for spouses and family members. In each newsletter, we'll highlight just a few of the community activities targeted toward family members. For more information on any of the programs listed here, contact Heidi Lumley or your company FRG leader.



Army Community Service and the Katterbach Dining Facility are holding a **Military Spouse Appreciation luncheon** on May 4. Please join the staff of ACS for a special lunch in your honor at the Katterbach Dining Facility from 1100 to 1300. The DFAC is preparing a special meal, and all spouses in attendance will be included in a raffle drawing. Prizes include Polish pottery (lots of it!), manicure and pedicure gift certificates, AAFES money-saving coupons, and pedometers for the Walk to Iraq and Back program. You are welcome to bring your kids. Normal prices to the DFAC will apply.

Bleidorn Library will be hosting a **Mother's Day craft** on May 6 at 1530. This year's craft will be stained-glass picture frames. Library staff will be taking pictures for those who would like their child's picture taken. Space is limited, so sign up today! Call 0981-183-1740 for more information. (If you live near Illesheim, Illesheim Library will be hosting the same event on the same day. Call 09841-83-675 to sign up for Illesheim's craft.)



AFN will be setting up cameras at the Katterbach Commissary on May 7 from 1100 to 1300 to film "**Hi Honey**" messages from family members to be broadcast to soldiers downrange. Cameras will be set up in front of the Commissary, but in case of inclement weather, they will move inside. If you have questions, please contact Task Force Gunfighter or your FRG leader.

What better way to get out and enjoy the spring weather than by joining Outdoor Recreation for a May trip! On May 4, **head to Heidelberg** and catch a glimpse of its thirteenth-century castle, 600-year-old university, and its romantic Altstadt. Walk along the cobblestone streets and let the unique atmosphere of this medieval town mystify you. Take advantage of the great shopping opportunities or ride the cable car up to the castle and enjoy the views of this city of dreams along the Neckar River. Cost is \$25 per person. On May 22, Outdoor Recreation is sponsoring a trip to the **Wertheim Outlet Mall**. If you're ready to shop, this is the place to do it! Cost is \$18 per person. And on May 28, you won't want to miss the **Soldier Show** in Illesheim. ODR will take you there, free of charge. For more information on any of these outings or to sign up, contact Outdoor Recreation at 09802-833-225 from Monday-Friday from 1200-1800.



Explore Bavaria with May's **One-Day Wanders**. On May 12, travel to the Geiselwind Freizeitland amusement park. Cost is the admittance to the park. On May 13, catch the bus to the Nurenberg Dutzendteich. Cost is free. And on May 27, explore the city of Wuerzburg for shopping and sightseeing. Cost is also free. Call Outdoor Recreation at 09802-833-255 to sign up and for pick-up times.

Get into shape this spring at the **Katterbach Fitness Center**! The fitness center has started a new indoor cycling class, which is held Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 1200-1300. Step aerobics classes are held Tuesdays from 1800-1900, and cardio kickboxing classes are held Thursdays from 1800-1900. No classes are held on U. S. holidays or training holidays. Call 09802-832-810 for more information on any of these classes.



Head to the **Katterbach Dining Facility** for family night on May 26! The DFAC will prepare a meal infused with Asian Pacific flavors. Menu items include: teriyaki steak, curry chicken, sweet and sour pork, beef bulkogi, steamed rice, shrimp fried rice, noodles, Chinese fried cabbage, kim che, cole slaw, chicken noodle soup, jellied orange salad, strawberry shortcake, chocolate chip cookies, hot rolls, and assorted pies. E-4 and below and their dependents pay \$2.85, and E-5 and above and their dependents pay \$3.30.

Join us in the jungles of **Lava Lava Island**, where Jesus's love flows! 2004 bookings for Ansbach Vacation Bible School begin in June, but mark your calendar now for this event. Kids will enjoy crafts, exciting games, experience Bible stories, sample tasty snacks, and hear unforgettable music during the weeklong event. The event will be held June 29 through July 2 from 0900-1200 each day. For more information, e-mail geojulia@netscape.net, or check out the website at www.geocities.com/jj_jewells.



Holding Pattern: Keeping Kids Occupied on a Plane

So school's almost out, and you've got a trip to the grandparents planned for the summer months, which would be perfect if it weren't a twelve-hour airplane ride away. You know things will be great once you get there, but getting there is another story. Unlike the last time you flew over the Atlantic with three kids, this time you're flying solo. That's right; you are the master and commander of this trip. But your plane ride doesn't have to be filled with kid-caused turbulence. Here are twelve ways to occupy your kids—and possibly get five minutes of time to yourself. Happy travels!

1. Surprise Packages

Before your trip, prepare lunch-sized paper bags of items to be given out every hour or two hours to each child. It takes a little bit of preparation to do this but it really helps young children. In each bag put a wrapped item—usually a small toy or craft to work on. Then in some of the surprise packages you can add juice or a snack, stickers and a piece of paper, or even something pertaining to the trip that you can talk about.

2. Travel Tickets

Use some colored construction paper to cut out some "tickets" for your trip. Give your child a pre-counted baggie full of tickets. Every half hour, they can turn in one ticket to you. When their tickets are gone, the trip has ended! This really helps young children get an idea of how much time is left on the journey.

3. Pipe Cleaners

Pack a new bag of multi-colored pipe cleaners and let their creativity run wild. They can make letters, flowers, animals, chains, jewelry, twist ties in their hair, practice braiding, and by the end, just balls of many colors.

4. Trip Bags

This can be a backpack for each child, or a canvas bag that is packed especially for the airplane ride. Kids can load it up with all their favorite trip stuff and other toys, so they can have it all handy and easily accessible to them on the plane. You can even decorate the bag to designate it as their special trip bag and use it to collect stickers or postcards from your trips.

5. Name the clouds

What do they look like? Find as many different shapes as you can. Tip: This works great if you've requested a window seat!

6. Tell Jokes

Take turns telling silly jokes like knock-knock jokes or

riddles. This is especially fun when the kids use their creativity to make up their own jokes. Even a two-year-old can tell jokes! They may not make sense, but they sure are hilarious. If you need help getting started, do a search on www.amazon.com or www.barnesandnoble.com for a good joke book.

7. Give Your Kids An Allowance for the Day

Tell them that this money is for snacks, treats, souvenirs etc. for your travel day, but when it is gone, that is all there is. Help them learn to budget their money and make good choices.

8. Read Out Loud

This passes the time quickly for the reader and for the family members who are listening. It's also a great opportunity to read those Harry Potter books as a family or maybe one of your favorite books from your childhood.

9. Make a Trip Journal

Give everyone a big spiral-bound sketch pad and a box of crayons or markers. Each day of the trip or for each event along the way, have your kids draw a picture of what you did that day or a map of where you went and write about it. You can also paste in souvenirs such as brochures, ticket stubs, and other momentous.

10. Invest in a Few Travel-Friendly Toys

Game Boy is an amazing toy that is perfect for airplane trips. In moderation, this little video games can be a great motivator and teach kids a few things too. Other great things to pack that can keep kids quiet include: Magna Doodle, Etch-a-Sketch, white boards with dry-erase markers, Colorforms, magnetic board games, and a Walkman or Discman.

11. Homework

This is probably a dirty word when you are supposed to be on vacation, but you might be surprised at their willingness to do a few worksheets or practice their handwriting when they don't have anything else to do. Make a packet of stuff for each child to do in the car—coloring pages, homework sheets, flashcards—and be sure to include crayons, glue stick, and anything else they might need to complete this mom-sponsored assignment.

12. Aluminum Foil Art

Pack a roll of aluminum foil in your carry on bag, and when the kids start to get cranky, give everyone a sheet of aluminum foil. Have them mold it into anything they want: animal shapes, Frisbees, balls, jewelry, crowns, headband, necklaces, and masks. Encourage creativity!



Bridging the Miles: Loving Your Mate from Afar

Contributed by Beth Calkins, RN, MSN, FNP

Marriage experts the world over agree that in order to keep your marriage healthy and growing, you need intimacy and communication. This seems to be a nearly impossible task when your mate is 2,000 miles away, and communication is limited to an occasional e-mail message or a less-often phone call. If your spouse is like mine, intimacy in e-mails is limited to the ambient temperature, the sand in the air (and everywhere else), and what the chow is like. Phone calls are a little better, but the "I love you's" are pretty hard to hear with so many soldiers passing by in the background (can't do that and keep the macho image). And rumor has it that the only thing harder to find than the post office is the PX. So what's a couple to do?

Author and marriage expert Gary Chapman published a best-selling book in 1992 entitled *The Five Love Languages*. In this book, as well as subsequent editions, Chapman categorized expressions of love into five different languages or modes of expression: quality time, words of affirmation, gifts, acts of service, and physical touch. Each person has a primary and a secondary "love language" from among these five languages and uses these in both expressing love to their mate (and other loved ones such as children) as well as receiving expressions of love.

The first love language, quality time, is defined as focused attention or simply the act of being together. When soldiers are not deployed, date nights, movies, shopping together, and just watching the television together fulfill this. This is much harder to accomplish when your mate is gone. However, there are some ways to achieve this even 2,000 miles apart. For those of you who have web cameras, spending time face to face is possible. If you don't have a web camera, you may want to take advantage of the video teleconferencing facilities as they are made available. Otherwise, make sure your phone time is quality time by limiting distractions during the conversations.

Words of affirmation are words that express encouragement, affection, endearment, and praise. These words are powerful (just as sharp or cutting words are powerful in a negative sense) and do much to uplift us when we receive them and our mates when we give them. They let our spouses know how much we appreciate who they are, what they do, and the part they play in our lives. Words of affirmation can be given in face-to-face conversation, through the phone, over the web camera, or through writing in e-mails, cards, or letters. Cards and letters will be easier for the non-deployed spouse as access to a post office is more readily available, but each of us must make some time to let our spouse know how much we care every chance we get. I encourage each deployed spouse (and definitely every non-deployed spouse) to send an occasional card or letter. These are important because they can be opened and re-read as often as needed.

Gifts should go without needing an explanation; however, their importance cannot be stressed enough. Gifts do not need to be expensive to express love. This is one area where we definitely have an advantage over previous deployments. The Internet is a wealth of sites for fulfilling this language, without having to make a special trip across the base. Each of us should tailor gifts to our mate but some suggestions for the women are bath and body products, charms, books, and perfume. Books, computer games, CDs, and DVDs make great gifts for our men. Food is always appreciated, but if you are buying for your lady back home, make it some nice chocolates. Non-deployed spouses are usually better at sending packages, but if you are a deployed spouse reading this: SEND A GIFT! Every month or so is ideal. Remember, it doesn't have to be expensive, just something to let your spouse know you are thinking about him or her. (And here's a tip for the guys: No Victoria's Secret until just before R & R or redeployment!)

The next love language, acts of service, is the process of doing things that are pleasing to your spouse and demonstrating your love for him or her. Again, this may seem an impossible task for the couple split due to a deployment, but these are doable with a little creativity. The deployed spouse performs acts of service when taking time to call or e-mail, mail a letter or package, or making a gift purchase on the Internet. The non-deployed spouse performs an act of service every time a package is mailed (trust me, all that wrapping with brown paper and finding a parking spot at the post office is an act of service) or whenever he or she shops for a spouse. This can even be taken one step further by making cookies (who has time to make cookies?), helping the kids make homemade cards or gifts, or finding things that will make your spouse more comfortable while downrange.

The final love language is physical touch and does not need to be defined. I know that most of you will say this is impossible—but again, a little creativity. You may find something special for your mate such as a blanket or stuffed animal that you sleep with first then send your spouse. Obviously this is a poor substitute, but it is fulfilling the touch requirements. Just remember that all of that "touch" will need to be made up for when the soldiers returns, so for now, get your hugs from your kids (if you don't have any, volunteer in the community and you'll meet lots of kids who want to give hugs) and dream about the future.

Again, I cannot stress the importance of remaining intimate throughout the deployment. Use these love languages to help—especially words of affirmation, gifts, and acts of service. Let your partner know how important he or she is to you and how important your marriage is to you. And if nothing else, send your mate a copy of this article and maybe he or she will get the hint and you'll get the benefits!

Sure Start

Sure Start applications for the 2004-2005 school year are available. Applications will be reviewed by the Sure Start steering committee, and selections will be made in August based on eligibility criteria. All applications must be accompanied by a current LES. Call Nancy Carillo at Rainbow Elementary at 0981-15984 with questions.

Father's Day Messages

Would you like to send a special Father's Day message downrange? In the June issue of the *Gunfighter Gazette*, we'll be including messages to deployed fathers from their children, spouses, and/or parents. If you'd like to contribute a message, please e-mail it to Frannie Schneider at frannie.schneider@us.army.mil. Messages should be anywhere from two to five sentences. Please be sure to include the deployed soldier's name, the sender's name, and the sender's relationship to the soldier. Messages must be received by May 24, 2004. Please contact Frannie Schneider with questions at 09802-832-064/883 or 09875-978-402.



10 Tips for Having Control Over Your Life

There are times when being an Army spouse can leave you feeling powerless. That's why it's important to focus on things that we can control. Here are ten tips to help you do that.

1. Give up the thought of controlling others. The first thing that you can do to have more control over your own life is to give up any idea that you have any control over another person and his or her actions. Let go of your expectations. It frees up your mind to focus on yourself and move forward with the things that truly matter to you as a person.

2. Stop looking in everyone else's backyard. We are all guilty of looking at another's life and thinking, Why is there life easier? Think about the time you spend telling yourself stories about how perfect and wonderful the person next-door's life is. Ask yourself, what can I do in my own life to make things better? What are some of the things I would like to have/do in my own life that are missing? Make a list for yourself. Give this some thought, and try it for a while. You may find the results amazing.

3. Give yourself permission. How many times do you think to yourself, I wish I had done that. What stopped you? Just for today, think about something you really want to do, make a plan, and then do it. One small example would be taking an hour to exercise

4. Simplify your life. Start by prioritizing what it is you want to accomplish. One way to streamline your life is to learn to ask for help. Streamlining your life can be done by simple time management and organization skills. Initially it may take some extra effort to change your habits, but the outcome will be well worth it.

5. Define the difference between having self-confidence and being controlling. To have confidence means that you believe in your ability to set priorities for yourself and stick to them regardless of the influences surrounding you. To control means that you wish to control the actions of others and the outcome of things around you. Remember, the only person you have any control over is you.

6. Teach people how to treat you. You may not have any control over others' actions; however, you do have control over how you allow others to treat you. If you find yourself constantly stressed due to other people, you may want to begin asking yourself if it's worth having these people in your life any longer. Don't let others deter you from your goals and ambitions.

7. Develop personal boundaries. What behaviors in other people are acceptable to you, and what behaviors are not? Do you find yourself saying yes to things more often than you'd like? What is your big-

gest fear about saying no? No one can force you to tolerate something that is not okay with you. Your feelings should be respected.

8. Start with heart. Do you have an empty space in your life? What do you find is missing from your life? One way to discover this is to "start with heart." Look inside yourself and rediscover your dreams. Reflect on what your dreams are. Make a list of all the things you truly want in your life and begin to take steps toward attaining them.

9. Develop a support system. Surround yourself with people with more positive attitudes who can be there for you when you need that extra boost to stay on track. Whatever it takes, it helps to have someone in your corner who can hold your hand and help you when you need it.

10. Have gratitude.

Take some time to reflect on the people in your life who have been most helpful to you. Remember to show them that you appreciate their help, either by returning the favor or taking the time to listen to them and be supportive of their choices in their own life. Say thank you for the little things as well as the big things that they have done for you in the past. We all need support and guidance every now and then. Thank those who have helped you.

This piece was taken from topten.org.

Congratulations!

To all of our Ansbach Middle/High School Gunfighters, we salute you on a very successful school year! And to our graduating seniors, congratulations on all that you have accomplished and best wishes for a bright future. We are very proud of all of your accomplishments!

—1-1 AVN REGT Gunfighters



Back Row (L-R): Heather Lumley, Sean Lumley, Christine Moore, Nicole Calkins, Brandi Phillips, John Broam, Craig Williams, and Kaitlin Hadder. **Front Row (L-R):** Victor Leaks, Alex Edwards, Xavier Taylor, Deontay Quarles, David Mason, and Tyler Keel.

We salute our AMHS Gunfighters!



Back Row (L-R): Jessica Lee, Iesha Mahan, and Teal Podraza. **Front Row (L-R):** Missy Lee and Mikaela Clark.



Left Photo: Jonathan Austin

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GUNFIGHTER GAZETTE